



► Fundamental Rights and Social Policy

Fundamental Rights:

European Fundamental Rights Agency at last operational

The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) has taken up its work in Vienna on 1 March 2007 succeeding the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia <http://eumc.europa.eu/eumc/index.php> based on Council Regulation 168/2007 of 15 February 2007.

http://fra.europa.eu/eumc/material/pub/FRA/reg_168-2007_en.pdf

The primary task of the Agency underlines the significance of respect for European Fundamental Rights by making expert insights available to the European Institutions and Member States equally in matters relating to fundamental rights.

In its work, the Agency will depend in no small part upon support from civil society and the large number of non-governmental organisations. For that reason, the Regulation expressly provides for close cooperation with non-governmental organisations and the institutions of civil society, as well as for the establishment of a cooperation network ("fundamental rights platform").

Social Policy:

Public hearing on 21 March 2007 on the Green paper modernising labour law

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/labour_law/docs/2006/green_paper_en.pdf

In a public hearing held in the European Parliament experts from the academic field as well as a representative from EUROFOUND (European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions) <http://eurofound.europa.eu/index.htm> and the Commission presented in a questions and answers session the intention of the "Green paper on modernising labour law in the 21st century".

The Green paper should launch a debate on modifying labour law adapting to changes due to globalisation and demographic challenges. It was clear that social dialogue is needed as well as the strong involvement of the Social Partners. There will be a communication by the Commission expected end of June 2007.

Editorial by Emmanuel Jacob

The signature of the Berlin Declaration on 25 March 2007 by the EU Presidency under German Chairmanship, the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Parliament is a declaration on the success of the EU and the challenges for the future. The final version of this declaration was a result of long and difficult diplomatic discussions between the German Presidency and the EU member states. However, the result of this excessive fine-tuning is also that it can hardly be described as a "strong statement". The Declaration is a collection of values and standards that we share in the EU. Perhaps it is better to say 'values and standards that we **should** share in the EU'.

After the "NOS" in France and The Netherlands on the European Constitutional Treaty, Europe came to a standstill and was almost paralyzed. It was a strong will of the German Presidency to find a way out of this impasse. Even if the final decisions still have to be taken at the next European summit by the Head of States the aim is to place the EU on a renewed common basis before the European Parliament elections in 2009. We can only regret that the Berlin Declaration contained no other commitments or intentions of the member states. And yet, a few days before Federal Chancellor and EU Council President Angela Merkel declared in the German magazine Bild-Zeitung that we should go towards European armed forces. In spite of the fact that this statement can not be found in the declaration, EUROMIL is looking forward to discuss such a concept. A minimum harmonization of international standards during deployment and the promotion and development of a European legal status for troops engaged in European multinational units or multinational headquarters could be a first step in this direction.

► International Foreign and Security Policy

Meeting NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

with President and Vice-President of EUROMIL



The President and Vice-President of EUROMIL were welcomed by the NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in his Private Office for a "courtesy meeting". The President and Vice-President of EUROMIL thanked the NATO Secretary General for the possibility and invitation to present EUROMIL at the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council at ambassadors' level. The President of EUROMIL shortly addressed the disciplinary procedures in Spain and Portugal with regard to the right of association and its lacking implementation.

EUROMIL before the NATO Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

The Chairman of the EAPC, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, opened the meeting before the 46 present ambassadors of NATO allies and partners. He shortly introduced EUROMIL. The President of EUROMIL, Emmanuel Jacob, presented the structure, mission, goals and objectives of EUROMIL. The Vice-President, Colonel Bernhard Gertz, followed with a speech focusing on the activities of EUROMIL in the field of social and defense reform issues.

The German Ambassador Dr. Duckwitz explained the success of the concept of the "citizen in uniform" in the German Armed Forces and emphasized that the German Federal Armed Forces Federation has been contributing to this success since its foundation 50 years ago. He thanked the German Federal Armed Forces Federation for its contribution to represent the social and professional such an organization. It followed the response of for its support at the OSCE workshop in Baku on the President of EUROMIL thanked for the numerous of the NATO Military Committee General Henault from "warriors" in stricto sensu but human right defenders and association for military personnel in all NATO and partner thanked the President and the Vice-President of of NATO" today.

EUROMIL Delegation: Emmanuel Jacob, President of Dennis Granville, Board Member EUROMIL, Han Busker Simon Devereux Deputy Secretary General PDFORRA, and EUROMIL Staff (Christine, Jean-Sébastien, Jutta, Gottfried).



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EUROMIL, Bernhard Gertz, Vice-President of EUROMIL, Board Member EUROMIL, Risto Aitov, Chairman of SSSVO, Ari Pakarinen, Päällystöllitto, Steve Maertens, ACMP-CGMP

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EUROMIL/33 Avenue Général de Gaulle/1050 Brussels/Tel:+32 2 626 06 80/Fax:+32 2 626 06 99

E-Mail: euromil@euromil.org <http://www.euromil.org>

► International Foreign and Security Policy

President of EUROMIL meets with the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee (EUMC)

The President of EUROMIL met with the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee (EUMC), General Henri Bentégeat, to present EUROMIL as an organisation with its mission, goals, policy areas and objectives. A discussion followed on the necessity or not of minimum social standards for multinational operations, and the new nature of missions like i.e. in the case of the EUFOR RD Congo, namely security sector reform, and more particular election observation.



It was agreed to meet on a more regular basis and address particular issues which are on the agenda of EUROMIL in succeeding meetings.

The EUMC has a permanent Chair. He is a Four-star flag officer on appointment, preferably a former Chief of Defence of an EU Member State. He is selected by the Chiefs of Defence (CHODS) of the Member States and appointed by the Council. His term of office is in principle three years.

As the Chairman he is the spokesman of the EUMC, participates in the PSC as appropriate and attends Council meetings when decisions with defence implications are to be taken.

He performs the function of military adviser to the SG/HR on all military matters, in particular, to ensure consistency within the EU crisis management structure.

► EUROMIL Internal

ACMP-CGPM have moved to their new building in Zaventem recently

The EUROMIL office used the opportunity to visit the new facilities of ACMP-CGPM at Zaventem during the open days held on 16 and 17 February 2007. Once provided with typical Belgian specialties the staff of EUROMIL had a close look at the Secretary General's office of ACMP-CGPM, the President of EUROMIL, Emmanuel Jacob.



Rights Commissioner Decision taken in favour of two PDFORRA members on a complaint under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act of 2005

The Rights Commissioner in Ireland issued a decision in January 2007 ruling that the claimants (two members of PDFORRA) are to be compensated by the payment of 500€ as they referred to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 which provides for protection against penalisation or a threat of penalisation for making a complaint to an employer regarding safety, health and welfare at work.

The Military Authorities argued that as the charges were withdrawn before the hearing the complainants were not penalised nor threatened with penalisation. PDFORRA mentioned that the individuals were charged with offences under military law following the raising of health and safety concerns.

Parliamentary Crisis in the Ukraine

KITUS has addressed both, the President and the Prime-Minister to solve the Parliamentary crisis in a peaceful way without participation or involvement of the Armed Forces as the President Yushchenko has ordered the dissolution of the Parliament against the will of the Prime Minister Yanukovich on 4 April 2007. The Constitutional Court is asked for its legal opinion on it.



Mikko Harjulehto is the new Secretary General of EUROMIL. He will start his function in the EUROMIL Office in Brussels as of 16 of April 2007.

Born on 12 March 1966 in Nairobi (Kenya) Mikko Harjulehto studied Political Science and International Politics in Vienna and Hamburg. After traineeships in the Finnish Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Defence he moved 1997 to Brussels where he worked as a research assistant in the General Directorate for research of the European Parliament and as a consultant in the General Secretariat of the European Commission.

Back in Helsinki, he was employed 1998-2000 by an NGO named Finland-Society and represented the interests of expatriate Finns for more than two years. A major reform of Finnish citizenship law introducing the possibility of dual citizenship was one of the main projects coordinated by him. He later worked as a political advisor for the Finnish Member of the European Parliament Piia-Noora Kauppi and managed her Brussels' office. Since September 2003 he acts as advisor for international affairs in the Finnish Defence Command. Mikko is a member of the personal staff of the Finnish Chief of Defence. He will move to Brussels once again to take up his position of Secretary General of EUROMIL on 16 April this year.

In addition to his experience in the field of the international and European Defence politics, he has a military background as he did his national service in the Marine Infantry. He currently holds the rank of reserve Warrant Officer. His grandfather and both uncles from his mother's side were professional soldiers; the social dimensions of military life are thus very familiar to him.

Finally, he is the author of several articles on security and military issues published in Finnish and German magazines and newspapers.

Finnish and German are his mother tongues, he also speaks English, French and Swedish.

► Calendar April/May

- 13 April: Board Meeting EUROMIL, Hertogenbosch (NL)
- 17 April: EPSU-EUROMIL Seminar, Luxembourg (Lux)
- 24-25 April: Charter Committee Meeting, Bonn (DE)
- 9-13 May: Presidium Meeting, Cracow (PL)
- 14-15 May: Depleted Uranium Exhibition, European Parliament, Brussels (BE)
- 24-26 May: EUROMIL at NATO Parliamentary Assembly Meeting, Madeira (PT)